

DAVID TITCOMB (a Bennington College faculty member from 1981-86) has a strong commitment to contemporary music and has spent the last few years developing this concert of new works as a way of expanding the repertoire of the bass trombone in chamber music. Four of the five compositions on the program tonight were commissioned by Mr. Titcomb and are being presented on this occasion as a warm-up for the premieres on Sunday, November 17 in the Merkin Concert Hall at the Abraham Goodman House in New York City. Three of the five compositions are by Bennington College composers. In the role as soloist as well as one among equals of the ensemble, the common denominator in these works is the bass trombone. The composers have used unusual combinations of instruments and voice to augment, contrast and enhance this interesting instrument.

Mr. Titcomb is currently bass trombonist with the New York City Opera and an Associate Member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. He also frequently performs with the New York City Ballet Orchestra as well as the New Orchestra of Westchester. He has appeared at several major music festivals, including the Spoleto Festival in Italy and Charleston, SC, the Marlboro Festival, the Waterloo Music Festival and the Regensburg Festival in Germany. Also active in performances on period instruments, Mr. Titcomb has toured the United States and Europe with the New York Cornet and Sakbut Ensemble as the groups' bass sakbut player. He recently participated in a SONY recording of the Schubert 'GREAT' C Major symphony with the Classical Band using a modern replica of a classical period F bass trombone.

Educated at SUNY-Purchase and the Yale School of Music, his principal teachers were John Clark and John Swallow. On the faculty at Bennington College in Vermont from 1981 to 1986, he directed the Brass Quintet Workshop Series for student composers writing for brass ensembles and performed numerous works for solo trombone. He is presently on the faculty of the Ethical Culture Schools in New York.

## BENNINGTON COLLEGE MUSIC DIVISION

### PRESENTS

# DAVID TITCOMB

## Bass Trombone

### Guest Artists

Shem Guibbory, violin

Paul Cortese, viola

Michael Finckel, cello

Jeffrey Levine, bass

Jim Baker, percussion

Lee Soper, trumpet

Janet Paulus, harp

Donald Collup, baritone

with  
Elizabeth Wright

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1991

8:15 p.m.

GREENWALL MUSIC WORKSHOP

## PROGRAM

In Time\*

DAVID SAMPSON

Aurora\*

## GERRY HEMMINGWAY

Herrick Songs\*

ALLEN SHAWN

(pause)

## Ghost Stories\*

PETER GOLUB

## A Suite for Nathaniel (1988)

JEFFREY LEVINE

*\*Premiere*

### A Suite for Nathaniel (1988)

Jeffrey Levine

- 1) Nathaniel wakes up sleepily; then he quickly kills two dragons hiding in the lotion cabinet.
- 2) Nathaniel goes out the door triumphantly; he looks for his real father in the woods and he sings his song.
- 3) Nathaniel meets the king of the forest, a music lover, volatile, but fundamentally amusing.
- 4) The king's merry band holds an impromptu jam session.
- 5) Nathaniel plucks (pizzicato) the violin (and bow) from where it had been left hanging on the lowest branch of the party tree and plays an animated jig, which causes everyone to dance energetically.
- 6) Everyone goes to sleep, tired from playing and dancing.
- 7) Nathaniel's real father comes and together, they go home.  
  
("My boy, where did you get that beautiful violin?"  
"You came back", Nathaniel said and looked at the beautiful thing in his grip and wondered how long it would take to learn how to play it...)



### 3. Corinna's Going a Maying

*(Stanzas 1 and 4)*

Get up, get up for shame, the Blooming Morne  
Upon her wings presents the god unshorne.  
See how Aurora throwes her faire  
Fresh-quilted colours through the aire:  
Get up, sweet-Slug-a-bed, and see  
The Dew-bespangling Herbe and Tree.  
Each Flower has wept, and bow'd toward the East,  
Above an houre since; yet you not drest,  
Nay! not so much as out of bed?  
When all the Birds have Mattens seyde,  
And sung their thankfull Hymnes: 'tis sin,  
Nay, profanation to keep in,  
When as a thousand Virgins on this day,  
Spring, sooner then the Lark, to fetch in May.  
Come, let us goe, while we are in our prime;  
And take the harmless follie of the time.  
We shall grow old apace, and die  
Before we know our liberty.  
Our life is short; and our dayes run  
As fast away as do's the Sunne;  
And as a vapour, or a drop of raine  
Once lost, can ne'r be found againe:  
So when or you or I are made  
A fable, song, or fleeting shade;  
All love, all liking, all delight  
Lies drown'd with us in endlesse night.  
Then while time serves, and we are but decaying;  
Come, my *Corinna*, come, let's goe a Maying.

### 4. To Anthea

Now is the time, when all the lights wax dim;  
And thou (*Anthea*) must withdraw from him  
Who was thy servant. Dearest, bury me  
Under that *Holy-oke*, or *Gospel-tree*:  
Where (though thou see'st not) thou may'st think upon  
Me, when thou yearly go'st Procession:  
Or for mine honour, lay me in that Tombe  
In which thy sacred Reliques shall have roome:  
For my Embalming (Sweetest) there will be  
No Spices wanting, when I'm laid by thee.

## Program Notes

### In Time - by David Sampson

**In Time** for bass trombone, piano and percussion is a single movement, eight minute work written in 1989. Commissioned by David Titcomb for premiere tonight, the work was inspired by the events at Tiananmen Square and is dedicated to the victims. Although there is no direct linear program for **In Time**, the dramatic images of bravery against overwhelming military force and the sense of betrayal by the Chinese Government to its people permeate the work.

### Aurora - by Gerry Hemmingway

Aurora found its original impetus in the texture of life and sound in our fair city (Also known as the crawling metropolis) that I experienced this past summer. I specify this past summer as my perception of the often avoided experience was unavoidably skewed due to long awaited rearrangement of fundamental aspects of my life. Now the helicopters, detuned engines, soiled paper cups, overmodulated ice cream trucks all took on a more urgent and perhaps more skilled quality. What this has to do with an ongoing interest in four voice polyphony and a continual shifting relationship between the melodic themes and the rhythmically based textures is, well, not terrifically important, but it is real for me.

See what you think and anyway my real hope is that Aurora temporarily lifts you away from it all.

### Herrick Songs - by Allen Shawn

Robert Herrick, born exactly four hundred years ago, was the author of some fourteen hundred verses and for most of his life a country priest, which calling did not prevent him from continuing to write about a long list of "mistresses" or about his love of tavern life. Influenced by the classically oriented poetry of Ben Johnson, whom he considered his mentor, his work is described as being completely natural in its references to the customs and ceremonies of the ancient world, even in the most personal of his poems, and as exhibiting a kind of paganism.

Ovid, Horace, and Catullus are drawn upon for themes, structures and turns of phrase.

Although some verifiably real women are referred to in Herrick's work, those with classical names, including Julia (the "prime of all" mentioned in sixty poems), Corrina, and Anthea, seem to most scholars to be fictitious. Herrick is often described as a lyrical and pastoral poet, and as a miniaturist. But even in his celebrations of village festivities and descriptions of flowers there is always the larger overriding theme of the transience of things.

The settings of these four poems (one of which, "Corrina's Gone A Maying" is represented only by its first and fourth stanzas) form a continuous whole. Between poems one and two, and three and four, there are brief connecting interludes; poem three follows poem two without pause.

This piece was written in the summer of 1991 on a commission from trombonist David Titcomb, to whom it is gratefully dedicated.

Ghost Stories - by Peter Golub

Having lost several close friends in recent years to AIDS, I began wondering how these joyous, mischievous and outrageous souls were making out in the next world. Images of ghosts wandering where they shouldn't, challenging authority, and behaving in a generally unorthodox manner led to a scenario, a kind of program on which this piece is loosely based.

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A Suite for Nathaniel - by Jeffrey Levine

A Suite for Nathaniel was written in the spring of 1988. The "libretto" is loosely based on an original poem by the poet Stephen Sandy in collaboration with his then five-year-old son, Nathaniel. The first performance took place in New York City, in March, 1989. What better way to use this odd and delightful combination of Bass Trombone, Violin, 'Cello, and Bass Fiddle, than to portray a curious children's story in sound.

Text

Robert Herrick  
(1591-1634)

1. Upon Julia's Clothes

When as in silks my *Julia* goes,  
Then, then (me thinks) how sweetly flows  
That liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes and see  
That brave Vibration each way free;  
O how that glittering taketh me!

2. To Daffadills

Faire Daffadills, we weep to see  
You haste away so soone:  
As yet the early-rising Sun  
Has not attain'd his Noone.

Stay, stay,  
Untill the hasting day  
Has run  
But to the Even-song;  
And having pray'd together, we  
Will goe with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,  
We have as short a Spring;  
As quick a growth to meet Decay,  
As you, or any thing.

We die,  
As your hours doe, and drie  
Away,  
Like to the Summers raine;  
Or as the pearles of Mornings dew  
Ne'r to be found againe.